

NEW Hudson Avenue Project: Street & sidewalk repair plus new trees & grass

An exciting transformation is taking place on two blocks of Hudson Avenue between Ontario Street and South Lake Avenue. This project, now under construction, is a combination of PHNA's \$50,000 ARPA demonstration grant for Street Trees &

Greenery with other City resources for streets and sidewalks (roughly 10 times that amount). It includes approximately 50 new trees, additional grassy areas, replacement/repair of sidewalks, new curbing, and repaving of the street surface.



In combining these projects, the City Department of General Services agreed to include a demonstration component which restores grass to the “maintenance strips” between sidewalks and curb on one of the two blocks (the block between Quail and South Lake). These maintenance strips were paved over with blacktop several decades ago on many blocks of Midtown Pine Hills and in other primarily rental neighborhoods. PHNA has long argued for removal of that blacktop and restoration of grass, as it improves the livability and environmental qualities of residential blocks. Grass rather than pavement supports tree growth by allowing for more moisture to reach tree roots. It mitigates stormwater runoff, reduces the “heat island” effect of pavement, dampens street noise, and generally makes residential blocks much more pleasant and livable.

In other recent projects in similar areas, DGS has paved over these maintenance strips with concrete (a surface preferable to blacktop). That approach was taken in part due to concerns that some property owners (primarily absentee landlords) will not adequately care for grass. PHNA has pushed back on this concern, citing the substantial benefits of grass, neighborhood equity concerns and noting that continuing enforcement of existing city code requirements has already had a significant positive effect on property maintenance generally and mowing of lawns specifically. PHNA is grateful for the compromise approach and will be working to ensure the demonstration project's success.

Our [letter to Mayor Sheehan](#) thanked her for the investment in Midtown Pine Hills and for the compromise approach adopted by DGS. Our write up on the [original ARPA Demonstration project](#) includes pictures of the target blocks. We'll be reporting more on this project as it proceeds.